

Democratic participation in armed conflict: military involvement in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq. By Patrick A. Mello. Basingstoke: Palgrave. 2014. 259pp. Index. £65.00. ISBN 978 1 13738 650 2. Available as e-book.

Under what conditions do states participate in collective military operations? After the number of multilateral operations increased exponentially in the beginning of the 1990s, this question became the subject of intense academic debate. Building on case-studies of the Persian Gulf War, Operation Allied Force in Kosovo, Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and the 2003 war in Iraq, scholars generally conclude that a state's contribution to a multilateral operation is the result of a complex interaction between domestic and international-level variables. Although Patrick Mello arrives at similar conclusions, his innovative theoretical framework, rich empirical data and, especially, his rigorous methodological approach set this book apart from comparable studies on the subject.

Mello situates his research in the democratic peace debate. However, instead of focusing on why democracies rarely wage war against each other, he examines under which conditions democracies participate in multilateral operations. The book sets off with a comprehensive review of explanations for democratic conflict involvement from which five explanatory conditions are derived. In line with nearly every empirical work on military burden-sharing, states with greater military capabilities are expected to make a disproportionately large contribution. Other prevailing explanations, like public opinion and parliamentary veto power, are also incorporated in the theoretical framework. However, Mello introduces two important causal conditions that, so far, have been largely overlooked in the academic literature. First, the author draws attention to the substantial variation in constitutional restrictions on the type of military operations democracies are permitted to participate in. Second, the study links involvement in multilateral operations to partisan politics by hypothesizing that right-leaning executives are less reluctant to engage in military operations.

This combination of original and prevailing explanations results in one of the most comprehensive theoretical frameworks for participation in multilateral operations. A particular strength of the framework is that it formulates hypotheses on how the level of military participation is determined by the complex interaction of the aforementioned causal conditions. For example, parliamentary veto power is not expected to be sufficient for non-participation by itself, but only in combination with public opposition to military engagement.

The empirical test of the theoretical framework builds on fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis, a method particularly suited to the purpose of the study. Not only is it capable of capturing the complex interactions that are expected to explain military participation, this method also allows for a structured comparison of a large number of cases. The study examines the level of participation in three armed conflicts: Operation Allied Force in Kosovo, Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and the 2003 Iraq War. This results in a total of 83 cases of democratic participation and non-participation in armed conflict, by far exceeding the number of observations generally incorporated in comparable studies on the subject.

The book primarily focuses on comparing democratic participation within each conflict. The variables are operationalized for every case separately, which substantially increases the validity of their measurement. For example, in every operation, the coding of military participation is dependent on whether the countries contributed combat forces. However, in the context of the intervention in Kosovo, participation in the strike missions was sufficient for the highest score. In contrast, a similar coding for Operation Enduring Freedom

also required sending ground forces, whereas participating from the very beginning of the invasion was necessary for receiving the highest coding in the Iraq War case-study. With these differences, the author takes into account the specific denotation of military participation in the historic circumstances of each operation.

Although the specific conditions that lead to military participation diverge across operations, several findings are consistent across all cases. The analysis revealed that militarily powerful states were indeed more inclined to participate, but only under specific conditions. For the interventions in Afghanistan and Kosovo, the analysis yielded evidence in support of the importance of public backing. However, popular support turned out to be far less important for the Iraq War. In contrast, theoretical expectations regarding partisan politics were only confirmed for this more controversial operation, which constituted the only case where right-leaning governments were indeed more likely to participate. Results more consistently confirmed the detrimental importance of the other innovative causal factor of Mello's framework: the absence of constitutional restrictions is a necessary condition for participation in all operations.

In general, the book's conclusions add substantially to the rich academic debate on democratic peace theory and state participation in multilateral operations. This theoretically innovative and methodologically rigorous work can be highly recommended to anyone interested in the subject.

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Governance, civil society and cultural politics*

Do Muslim women need saving? By **Lila Abu-Lughod**. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press. 2013. 336pp. £21.99. ISBN 978 0 67472 516 4. Available as e-book.

Abu-Lughod has written a polemical work which challenges the very category of 'Muslim women' which appears in the title. More an extended essay than an academic book, it draws on the author's past ethnographic research and, more importantly, her anthropological formation and experience in the Middle East to make its important and timely arguments.

The target of Abu-Lughod is the 'common sense' about Islam which emerged in the United States post-9/11 and underpinned the Bush administration's 'war on terror'. In answer to the rhetorical question which constitutes the book's title, the author shouts out: 'Of course they don't! Leave them alone and sort yourselves out.' In six absorbing and lively chapters, Abu-Lughod marshals evidence from the life stories of a number of women (who happen to be Muslim, among other things), mostly in rural Egypt, to make a serious dent in the stereotype of 'the Muslim woman' and to question the very existence of such a uniform being. She shows that the images of disempowerment associated with that stereotype often do not hold and that, if anything, disempowerment is shared by both men and women in the Middle East and caused by material forces of domination which are local and global, political and economic. The needs, concerns and aspirations of 'Muslim' women, moreover, are not quite what we in the West imagine. Abu-Lughod argues persuasively that 'Islam' cannot be isolated from other aspects of women's lives and that depicting it as the source of injustices and inequalities, as is the tendency in recent debates, is untenable. 'Islam' as such does not exist; in the author's own words, 'IslamLand' is not a real place inhabited by real people.

* Stephen J. C. Andes, *The Vatican and Catholic activism in Mexico and Chile: the politics of transnational Catholicism, 1920-1940*, pp. 1508-510.